

SCIENCE & EDUCATION Impact

Benefits from USDA/Land-Grant Partnership

Ready for the World

Keeping it real.

Life can be challenging. Helping people lead better lives is a hallmark of the partnership between the USDA and the nation's land-grant universities. Each day, educators, extension specialists, and researchers in this nationwide partnership equip young people and adults with knowledge and skills they need to get better educations, find better jobs, be more productive at home and work, and to make a positive difference in their communities.

Payoff

- **Real education.** As young people and adults see more and more value in education, land-grant universities are responding – both in the traditional college setting and beyond. New degree programs at **Washington State** are expected to help that state's wine industry fill a need for 4,700 more employees across that state by 2006. **Arizona's** Racetrack Industry Program supplies graduates for that growing field, and more than 80 percent of them move directly from college into the industry. **Florida** offers one of the country's only degree programs in the science of packaging various foods and other products. **Nebraska** students now participate in the nation's first culinology degree program that lets them study food and nutrition science, as well as hone their culinary and commercial food preparation skills. All these and scores of other innovative programs are designed to meet emerging needs for individuals and businesses.
- **Real situations.** Land-grant university efforts go well beyond the traditional college classrooms in providing real education for real people in real situations. **Virginia Tech** improved student performance when it experimented with changing from lectures to a more active learning environment in its undergraduate natural resources curriculum. **South Dakota State's** work with the Flandreau Indian School is helping Native American students who attend that school from across the country to make a smooth, successful transition from high school to college. And 92 percent of participants in one school passed to the next level in science after **Wisconsin** Extension 4-H hands-on learning experiences were incorporated into their after-school club.

**RESEARCH,
EXTENSION AND
EDUCATION
AT WORK**

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- **Real experience.** Ninety percent of the **North Dakota State** graduates from crop and weed sciences had undergraduate internships that provided increased hands-on experience in weed control. Nearly 70 percent of **Illinois** agricultural students complete internships. And 95 percent of **Arizona's** dietetics students – well above the national average of 60 percent – participate in internships. In these and many more other cases, the interns received valuable experience that generally led to higher-paying jobs, and the firms and agencies for which they worked benefited from their enthusiasm.
- **Real mix.** Today's young people and adults find themselves facing a rapidly changing world and ever-changing work environments. Respect for diversity and understanding of various cultures and global markets all are essential for success in today's business environment. Many universities, such as **Virginia Tech**, **Illinois**, **Kentucky**, **West Virginia**, and many more, now mix international experiences or exchange programs into their degree programs. All help to prepare participants for work in today's mix and send the message that today's graduates are ready for globalization.
- **Real support.** The **University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff** provides its Teens on the Go newsletter to high school teachers and students faced with numerous issues. The newsletter reached more than 100,000 youth last year, and readers noted that it helped teens make better choices in life. More than 50,000 students have been exposed to biotechnology, thanks to extensive equipment kits circulated among the state's teachers by **Virginia Tech**. **Cornell** helped minority teachers from urban settings take better information on agriculture and environmental topics to their students through an international experiential learning program dubbed TEACH — Teaching Educators about Agriculture and Conservation Holistically. And **Louisiana State** helped teachers prepare for mandated high school financial planning courses with summer workshops that covered a potential curriculum. The hundreds of participants reported they felt much more prepared to teach the subject after the workshops.
- **Real world.** Welcome to the Real World programs across the country help young people explore the daily challenges of careers, budgeting, bill-paying, and other aspects of adult life. Eighty-nine percent of participants in the **Louisiana State's** program and comparable "Reality Store" programs said they had gained greater knowledge of adult responsibilities and adjusted their concepts of needs, wants, and education goals for adulthood. Similar results were recorded in **Idaho** Real World sessions, where 93 percent of the participants increased their financial literacy. In sessions offered by **Alabama A&M**, two-thirds of the participants considered changing career plans as a result of what they learned. Institutions offering similar programs with similar results include an even greater mix of efforts – such as "Mall Mania" offered by **Mississippi State** – all aimed at helping young people learn what it means to manage their resources.



**Cooperative State Research, Education,
and Extension Service**
United States Department of Agriculture

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy, the Academic Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, the International Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center.

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